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LAST YEARS OF

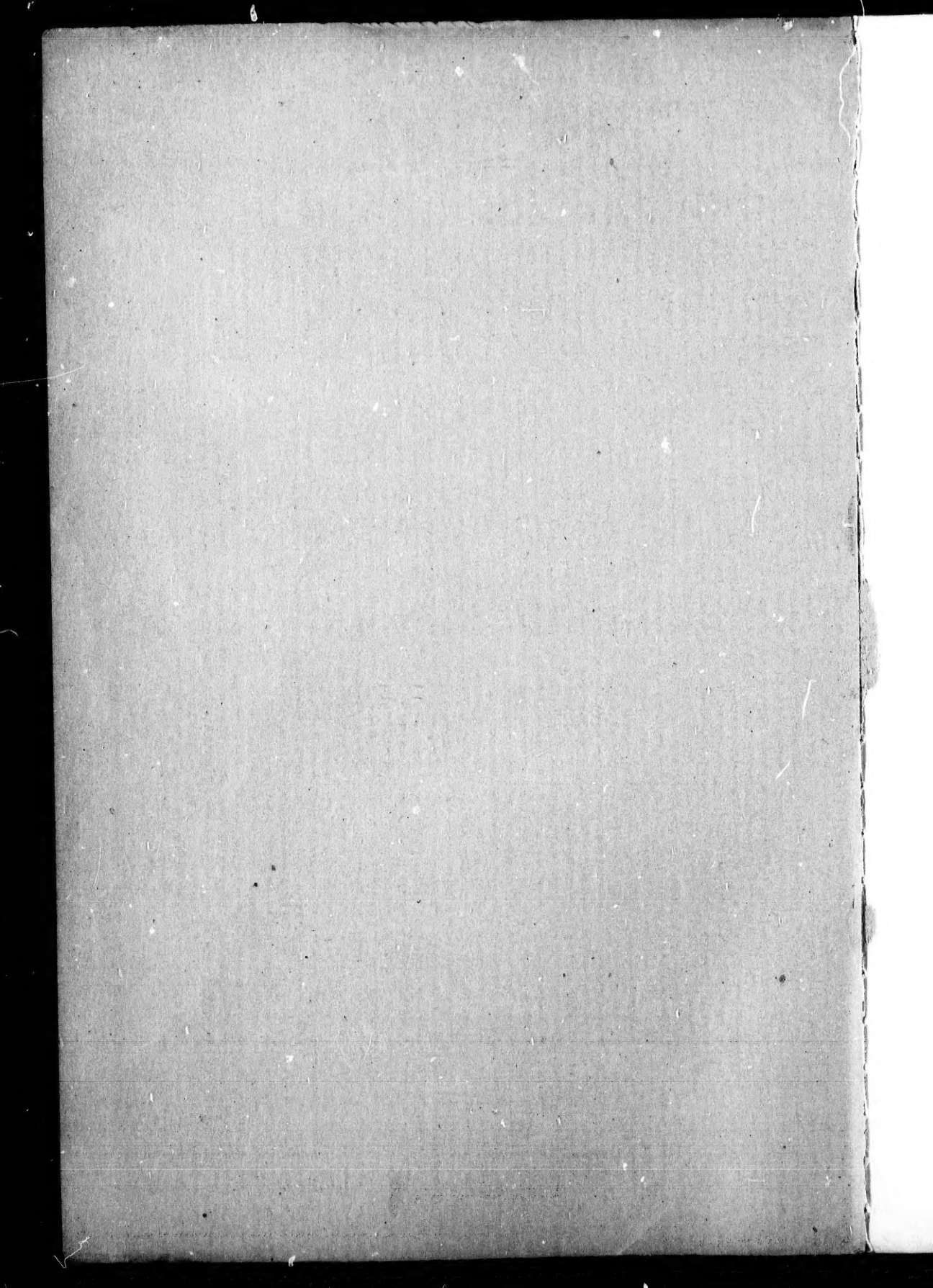
Charles de Biencourt

By DR. PATTERSON

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1896



VI.—*Last years of Charles de Biencourt.*

By DR. PATTERSON.

(Read May 19, 1896.)

We recently received from M. Dufosse, the well known bookseller in Paris, a document of some interest with reference to the first attempt at European settlement within the bounds of our Dominion. The original document has been reproduced by lithography and the following is a

TRANSLATION.

We, Charles de Biencourt, Sieur de Poutrincourt, in charge of the King's Academy, acknowledge receipt in cash from Messire Raymon Phelypeaux, Sieur de Herbault, Counsellor of His Majesty in the Council of State and Treasurer of the King's Treasury, *the sum of three thousand livres*, to us ordered for the pay and salary which His Majesty is pleased to give us during the present year, with which sum of three thousand livres we hold ourselves satisfied and well paid and whereof we give quittance to the aforesaid Sieur de Herbault, Treasurer of the King's Treasury for all claims in full. Witness our sign manual hereunto affixed on the last day of December, XVI^e twenty-one.

C. DE BIENCOURT.

*Poutrincourt.**At bottom in a different hand.*

Having charge of the Academy of our Lord the King with the pay of three thousand livres.

*On back.*XVII^e LXVI (No. 1766.)

For receipt voucher for the Treasurer of the King's Treasury, Messire Phelypeaux, of the sum of three thousand livres, as salary it is the pleasure of His Majesty to grant me on account of the office of Director of the King's Academy during the present year.

The above document is intrinsically of little or no value. It might be prized by the collector of antiques for its age and its calligraphy. It is only a receipt for his yearly salary of one of the thousands of persons holding offices of emolument under the French King. Still it is of some

importance as settling a question as to the concluding years of one, who bore a part of some interest in the first attempted settlement on the shores of the northern parts of America, and thus throwing a little light on part of the history itself. That is Charles de Biencourt. He was the second son of the Sieur de Poutrincourt who had come in the first expedition under De Monts for the settlement of Acadia in 1605, and who subsequently obtained a seigneurie at Port Royal and took an active part in the establishing and advancing the infant colony there. The eldest son must have died young, for we find Charles assuming his father's title after the latter's death, and he uses it in the above document. He is generally said to have come to Port Royal in 1610, but Champlain writing in 1624, says he had been eighteen years in Acadia, according to which he must have come with the first colony in 1605. At all events the father returned to France in 1611, leaving Charles in command at Port Royal. M. Sulte (*Transactions of Royal Society*, II (1) 33) asserts that the former was married in 1590, so that his second son could not at this time have been more than eighteen years of age. But another document to be referred to presently, described him as born in 1583, which would make him at this time about twenty-eight. This we deem more likely. At all events his father never returned, having been killed in 1615, in the service of the King of France at the siege of Mery-sur-Seine, and the settlers were left to maintain themselves as best they might. In the year 1613 came the raid of Argall, by which it was supposed that the settlement was wiped out of existence. Biencourt and a few Frenchmen however continued to occupy the ground, and on the 1st September, 1618, he writes to the authorities of the City of Paris, a patriotic and earnest letter urging them to send out colonists and to adopt other measures for the advancement of French colonization and the Christian religion in these regions. This is the last definite information we have hitherto had of him. It has been supposed that he continued at Port Royal till his death and this is asserted by several writers. M. Sulte in the article already quoted, says that he died at Port Royal in 1623, posioned according to report.

This is now proved to be incorrect. We have here a receipt signed by him and dated December, 1621, for three thousand livres, being his salary as director of the Royal Academy of Paris. Champlain indeed speaks of him in 1624 as having lived in Acadia for eighteen years, as if he were still there. But as he had been away from that province for years he might naturally be unaware of his having left. At all events, this shows him to have left Port Royal for good as early as the year 1621, and to have settled down in Paris, where he had influence enough to obtain an office of respectability and emolument. This he seems to have held for about seventeen years or till his death, about 1638. At all events according to another manuscript document dated April of that year,

offered for sale by M. Dufosse, being "Power granted to S'r de Vaux to administer certain of his properties" it appears that his death must have taken place shortly before that date.

In regard to Acadia, this confirms the statement of Sir Wm. Alexander, that the few French settlers remaining at Port Royal, neglected and unrecognized by the French authorities and depending upon transient traders for supplies, agreed under Latour to submit to Sir William and the English King.

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